

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
/071 W

-----058391 100958Z /20

O 100930Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7793
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 08386

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (FUKUDA, TAKEO), US, JA
SUBJECT: FUKUDA VISIT: VIEW FROM TOKYO

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA AND THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT
APPEAR GENUINELY PLEASED BY THE MAY 2-3 WASHINGTON SUMMIT
TALKS. THEIR MAIN SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS WERE ASSUAGED,
THEIR SEVERAL FEARS WENT UNREALIZED, AND A CORDIAL PERSONAL
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER
WAS REINFORCED. THE TREND TOWARD MORE CO-EQUAL, CANDID
EXCHANGES AND A MORE PROMINENT MULTILATERAL DIMENSION IN
OUR RELATIONS WAS STRENGTHENED. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE WAKE OF THE SENKAKUS INCURSION AND SOVIET
DOWNING OF A KOREAN PASSENGER PLANE, THE JAPANESE WERE
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ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THEIR VULNERABILITY. THEY WERE ALSO
DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT, IF THE DOLLAR DID NOT STABILIZE,
THEIR GROWTH PLANS AND EFFORTS TO RECTIFY THE TRADE BALANCE
COULD BE SERIOUSLY UNDERCUT. ON BOTH POINTS, THE PRESI-
DENT'S REASSURANCES WERE WELCOME AND CONVINCING.

2. THE JAPANESE WERE ALSO GREATLY RELIEVED THAT BILATERAL

ECONOMIC ISSUES DID NOT APPEAR TO DOMINATE THE SUMMIT VISIT. MANY IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S STAFF FEARED THE WASHINGTON TALKS WOULD REOPEN DISCUSSION OF DIFFERENCES SUBSUMED IN THE STRAUSS-USHIBA STATEMENT, AND OCCASION ACRIMONY, FINGER POINTING, AND HARSH WORDS. THAT RESULT COULD ONLY HAVE UNDERSCORED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT AND STRAINS IN THE RELATIONSHIP, RAISING QUESTIONS FOR FUKUDA AT HOME AND AUGURING POORLY FOR THE BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER'S SESSION ON THE HILL WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY RISKY, GIVEN THE HIGHLY CHARGED EMOTIONAL OVERTONES OF SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENTS ON TRADE ISSUES REPLAYED HERE. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS THUS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED THAT HE KNEW PERSONALLY MANY OF THOSE PRESENT AND BY THE CONSTRUCTIVE NATURE OF THE EXCHANGE. GIVEN THEIR EARLIER WORRIES, THE JAPANESE WERE DOUBLY GRATEFUL TO THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING THE SESSION. (FM SONODA, PREVIOUSLY LUKEWARM ON PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE, REPORTEDLY WAS CONVERTED BY THIS EXPERIENCE TO ACTIVE SUPPORT.)

4. IN COUNTRY WHICH SETS GREAT STORE BY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, MANY WERE STRUCK BY HOW WELL THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER APPEARED TO GET ON. NOT ONLY MEMBERS OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICIAL PARTY, BUT OTHERS WITH NO CONFIDENTIAL

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DIRECT POLITICAL CONNECTION, HAVE CONTRASTED PICTURES OF A SMILING PRESIDENTIAL COUPLE AND A GRINNING FUKUDA, WITH THE SOLEMN SUMMIT PICTURES OF THE PAST. THE POSITIVE SYMBOLISM WAS PARTICULARLY APPARENT IN THE TELEVISION COVERAGE.

5. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MEDIA CONTINUES RATHER UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE VISIT, IN LARGE MEASURE DUE TO MEDIA CUSTOM AND ITS SELF-APPOINTED ROLE AS GOVERNMENT CRITIC. BEYOND THIS, THE ABSENCE OF MAJOR ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED DEPRIVED THE MEDIA OF THEMATIC COVERAGE POSSIBILITIES, WHILE DEPARTURE FROM THE TRADITION OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE PRECLUDED THE FAVORITE PASTIME OF COMPARING THIS VISIT'S WITH THOSE PRECEDING. (VICE MINISTER ARITA, INCIDENTALLY, IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, EXPRESSED DELIGHT WITH THIS FELICITIOUS OUTCOME.) THE HO-HUM MEDIA EVALUATION WAS NOT UNEXPECTED, HOWEVER, AND DOES NOT APPEAR TO TROUBLE THE PRIME MINISTER OR OTHERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE VISIT. MOREOVER, THE HIGH MARKS REPORTEDLY ACCORDED THE VISIT BY U.S. OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN APPRECIATIVELY NOTED, AND THE VISIT BY ITS VERY NATURE HAS SERVED TO PROJECT FUKUDA AS MORE VIGOROUS AND PURPOSEFUL THAN WHEN HE SET OUT.

6. ALL IN ALL, THIS WASHINGTON SUMMIT MARKS ANOTHER STEP
IN AN EVOLUTION FROM PAST VISIT PRACTICE. THE OBVIOUS --
AND KEENLY FELT -- DISPARITY IN RELATIVE POWER, THE
DELIBERATE EMPHASIS ON SOMETIMES NARROW BILATERAL ISSUES,
THE PREOCCUPATION WITH BEARING GIFTS AND AVOIDING DEMANDS
ON THE PART OF THE JAPANESE ARE THAT MUCH FURTHER BEHIND
US. THE VISIT THUS OPENS THE WAY FOR EVEN LESS FORMAL,
FRANKER EXCHANGES BETWEEN MORE GENUINELY EQUAL PARTNERS
ON THE INCREASING NUMBER OF GLOBAL ISSUES WHERE JOINT
EFFORT IS ESSENTIAL. IF WE STILL HAVE SOME DISTANCE TO
GO BEFORE U.S.-JAPANESE SUMMITS APPROACH THE EASY EXCHANGES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 08386

NOW COMMON WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS, WE HAVE ALREADY COME
MUCH FURTHER THAN MANY OF US THOUGHT POSSIBLE JUST A FEW
YEARS AGO. MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

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TAGS: OVIP, US, JA, (FUKUDA, TAKEO)
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